

BOOTS IN THE FOREST

NAME: Todd DeMasters

POSITION: Forest Occupational Health & Safety Manager

PHOTO LOCATION: Boise National Forest



CAPTION: Boise National Forest Occupational Health and Safety Manager, Todd DeMasters, ensures the safety of all Forest personnel, including volunteers. On this day he was leading a weekend workshop to teach 16 Forest Service volunteers about proper chainsaw safety training.

"I grew up in the woods. My dad and uncles all worked for the Forest Service," reflects Todd DeMasters, occupational health and safety manager for the Boise National Forest. The phrase, "it runs in the family" seems applicable for DeMasters's career choice.

Following in his family's footsteps, he began a career with the Forest Service over 22 years ago, starting out on a 20-person severity wildland firefighting crew on the Idaho City Ranger District of the Boise National Forest. Throughout his career he's been a firefighter, fire crew supervisor and for the past five years, in his current position, as occupational health and safety manager.

"I love my job. It's as simple as that," DeMasters asserts, not an ounce of doubt in his voice.

Looking around his office, you can see the evidence of a Forest Service career spent well. From images of helicopters and engines, to DeMasters holding a chainsaw atop a large round of a felled-tree, these captured moments are interspersed among notes of achievement and recognition.

In his current position, DeMasters doesn't have what one might consider a routine day. He is responsible for ensuring the safety of personnel and volunteers across the forest, which means covering a wide-assortment of tasks and topics. But that's one of the reasons DeMasters loves his job.

"I really enjoy the variety," says DeMasters about his current position. "One of the best parts is being involved in anything and everything. I also really enjoy working with all of the different people."

DeMasters values the opportunity to make a change. And of course, one of the main reasons he loves working for the Forest Service is the opportunity to be outside, in many different capacities. One of his most interesting assignments, recently, was a thirty-day detail to an incident management team assigned to help with the Rainbow Family Gathering of Living Light celebration.



The event, held on a different national forest each year, has been in existence since 1972, and often has more than 30,000 attendees. As the occupational health and safety manager for the incident management team, DeMasters worked to maintain a healthy, sanitary environment for attendees. He completed water quality tests, ensured attendees boiled water, monitored the hygiene of latrines and worked with state and county medical services.

DeMasters's attention to safety doesn't end when he leaves the office. He's noticed that the precautions he supports on the Forest influence how he approaches safety at home during his time off. For him, working for the Forest Service is less of a job, and more of a way of life.

"Working for the Forest Service is a good job—it's satisfying to me," asserts DeMasters. "It's a job where I can still get outside and enjoy the outdoors. It's a perfect fit. I love the outdoors and I work for the Forest Service—they go hand-in-hand."